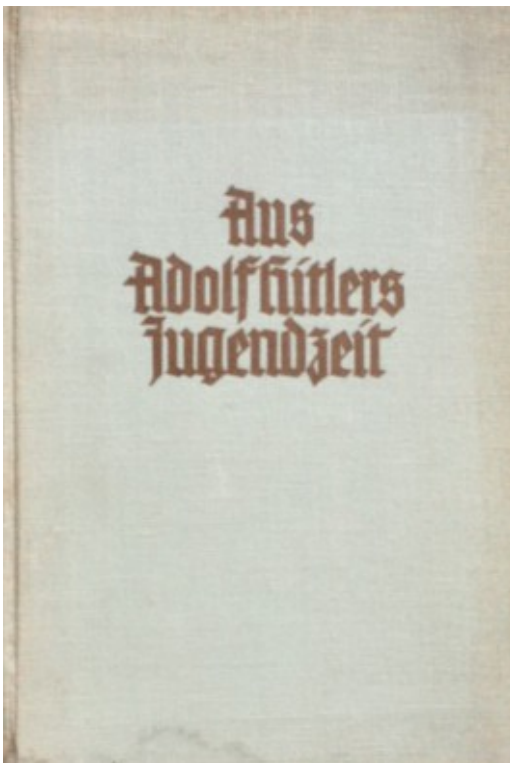


Books to avoid for Hitler authentication issues (3)

On Hugo Rabitsch' *Aus Adolf Hitlers Jugendzeit* (1938) (Adolf Hitler's Youth)

By Bart FM Droog, June 7, 2019



Hugo Rabitsch' book *Aus Adolf Hitlers Jugendzeit. Jugend-Erinnerungen eines zeitgenössischen Linzer Realschülers* (Deutscher Volksverlag G.m.bH., München, [February, 1938]) is not what it seems to be: a biography of the young Adolf Hitler. It is not.

Rabitsch was six or seven years younger than Hitler.¹ He had not been a contemporary student of Hitler, he had not known the young Hitler personally; he did however went in ca. 1906-1912 to the Realschule in Linz and had followed classes by the some of the former teachers of Hitler.

Basically, Rabitsch projected his own youth experiences on the Hitler of 1899-1907. Rabitsch liked to swim in the Danube river - so Hitler must have done so too.² Rabitsch liked to go to some special places in and around Linz - so Hitler must have done too. A good example of how Rabitsch operated is the following passage. Rabitsch described a ruin, and remarked: "Drawings of these walls were made by almost all boys with any drawing talent. It's inconceivable that Adolf Hitler wouldn't have done so too."³

1 Franz Jetzinger. *Hitlers Jugend. Phantasien, Lügen - und die Wahrheit. Mit 20 Tafeln*. Europa-Verlag, Wien, [1956]. Page 96. According to Jetzinger Rabitsch was six years younger than Hitler. The age gap might be even bigger, as Hugo Rabitsch was born in 1896.

2 Rabitsch, p. 29-31, 132.

3 Rabitsch, p. 38.

Is Rabitsch book then completely worthless, as Brigitte Hamann expressed?⁴ No - for Rabitsch did speak with eleven former classmates of Hitler and at least one former teacher, Theodor Gissinger. What they told is hardly interesting, but Rabitsch did compile lists of all of Hitler's classmates and teachers in 1900-1904 - and that's very interesting. Just as his reconstruction of the play list of the Linz theater 1903-1907.

Rabitsch also gave good descriptions of Linz, and the Linzer Realschule in the first decade of the 20th century, partially based on his own diaries.⁵

Rabitsch discovered also the portrait sketch of the young Hitler, made by F. Sturmlechner, one of his classmate from the Realschule in Steyr, 1905.

Quite remarkable is that Rabitsch did not mention August Kubizek at all. Even though he apparently did speak with Frau Hanisch, the landlady of the family Hitler in Urfahr, 1905-1907.⁶ This is as remarkable as the fact that Kubizek was not mentioned by Wilhelm Hagmüller, the boarder in the Hitler family 1905-1907.⁷

In a strange way the Rabitsch book tells us much more than it appears to do: he quotes only two of Hitlers former teachers, Theodor Gissinger and Eduard Huemer - both of them admirers of Hitler.

He remarked about the other teachers: "The few other teachers that are still alive are because of illness and old age incapable of following the recent events with a clear mind."⁸ Which was a clear lie - as at least one of them, Leopold Poetsch, was in the 1930's an outspoken opponent of Hitler, and refused to cooperate on a propaganda project for Hitler.⁹

One can conclude out of this that of the nearly thirty¹⁰ former teachers of Hitler, of those who were still alive in 1936/1937 only two said something which Rabitsch deemed usable for his book. But what both of them said is rather uninformative or rather strange. Huemer contributed nothing new about the young Hitler, Gissinger did.

4 Brigitte Hamann. *Hitlers Vienna. A portrait of the tyrant as a young man*. Note 256, page 416: "The book by Hugo Rabitsch (...) is completely uninformative; the author neither knew young Hitler nor contributed anything to his biography." In the German version: *Hitlers Wien. Lehrjahre eines Diktators*. Piper, München/Zurich, 1995. Noot 34, blz. 593.

5 Rabitsch, p. 66. Nota bene: Frau Hanisch from Linz is in no way related to Reinhold Hanisch.

6 Rabitsch, page 31.

7 Jetzinger, p. 131-133, 141. Rabitsch, p. 15

8 Rabitsch, p. 71

9 Jetzinger, p. 108, 114

10 Nineteen from the Realschule Linz, ca. ten from the Realschule Steyr. Rabitsch, p. 94-95.

Rabitsch: "Professor Gissinger told me explicitly that the teachers from Linz hadn't noticed anything exceptional about the young Hitler and that he had not been the leader of the class. (...) Gissinger could remember very well how Hitler went into dialogs with windswept trees, and how on these conversations the legend of how Hitler learned his talents as an orator in a forest was based."¹¹

Hitler the artist

Rabitsch remarked too that in the Realschule Linz the drawing and paintings made by the most talented students, were on permanent exhibition in the drawing classroom, and they still were in 1936/1937. No works made by Hitler were amongst them.¹²

Which is also quite strange, as, according to Rabitsch, Hitler had been a very talented painter, who at the age of ten designed and painted marvelous looking easter eggs.¹³

It can be called a small miracle that these mythical eggs never have surfaced on any Hitleriana auction.

11 Rabitsch, p. 72.

12 Rabitsch, p. 74; "Adolfs Hitlers Zeichentalent war damals schon auffallend hoch entwickelt. Professor Nawratil [Zeichenlehrer] konnte sich noch vor wenigen Jahren an seinen Schüler erinnern. Trotzdem ist kein Dokument aus unseres Führers Hand erhalten geblieben. Ich lernte zwei Jahre nach seinem Verlassen der Realschule alle Zeichnungen und Malereien, die begabten Schülern abgenommen worden waren, kennen. Sie hingen unter Glas und Rahmen in Zeichensaal und sind zum Teil jetzt [=1936/1937] noch dort, fünfunddreißig Jahre später. Von Adolf Hitlers Hand war ab 1906 nichts darunter. Man kann das Fehlen von Hitler-Zeichnungen mit seiner ausgesprochenen Abneigung, an der Schule irgendwie belobt oder anerkannt zu werden, in Einklang bringen."

13 Rabitsch, p. 20: "Feierlich wurde auch immer das Osterfest begangen. Die familie wohnte stets dem Auferstehungsfest in der Kirche bei, und bunt gefärbte Eier schmückten den Tisch. Adolf tat sich mitunder durch besonders hübsche Handmalereien auf Ostereiern hervor, deren Motive er schon als zehnjähriger Knabe selbst entwarf"

Who was Hugo Rabitsch?

Hugo Rabitsch Sr. (1896-1943) was the son in law of the Austrian pianist, conductor and biographer August Göllerich (1859-1923)¹⁴. He was married to Göllerich's daughter Erika (1901-1972).¹⁵ They had several children¹⁶, one of them was Hugo Rabitsch Jr. (1933-2010), who became a famous pianist and conservatory teacher.¹⁷

From the text it appears that Rabitsch Sr. served in the First World War as an officer in the Austrian-Hungarian Army.¹⁸ He was an ardent national socialist¹⁹, who lived in 1937 in the Ruhr area in the Germany. In February 1938 he was named as 'captain, retired', in an correspondence with the German consul in Linz, Paul Trompke.²⁰

Antisemitism in Rabitsch book?

For a Nazi propaganda book the work of Rabitsch contains remarkable little antisemitic passages. Only when Rabitsch described Dr. Schwarz, the religion teacher at the Realschule, anything about Jews is said at all. And then only to dismiss the rumors that this man was of Jewish descend.²¹

14 August Göllerich. *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950*. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, [Seen 07-06-2019]. http://www.biographien.ac.at/oebl_2/16.pdf

15 Stefan Ikarus Kaiser. August Göllerich (1859-1923): Pianist, Dirigent, Musikpädagoge, Musikschriftsteller. Heimatblätter 2009 Heft 1/2. Page 77. https://www.land-oberoesterreich.gv.at/files/publikationen/KD_Heimatblatt_1_2_2009.pdf

16 Rabitsch, p. 27.

17 Karin Schütze. Hugo Rabitsch. Pianist and Pädagoge schrieb Melodie der Bruckneruni mit. *OÖNachrichten*, 02-09-2010. <https://www.nachrichten.at/oberoesterreich/nachrufe/Hugo-Rabitsch-Pianist-und-Paedagoge-schrieb-Melodie-der-Bruckneruni-mit:art86198,453421>

18 Rabitsch, p. 41.

19 Jetzinger, p. 96.

20 Akten des Konsulats Linz erschlossen (1920-1938). Pressemitteilung Auswärtiges Amt. Politisches Archiv, Berlin, 29-03-2016. <https://archiv.diplo.de/arc-de/aktuelles/akten-des-konsulats-linz-erschlossen-1920-1938-/1600434>

21 Rabitsch, page 66.

Rabitsch' book banned

Rabitsch' book was published in February 1938,²² a month before the *Anschluss*. It was banned in Nazi Germany shortly after it was released. Jetzinger remarked about this ban: "Even though the booklet was an eulogy on Hitler, it was banned (...) because the Führer wasn't deified enough."²³

That could be the reason. Another reason could be that Rabitsch had dared to criticize an earlier Nazi Hitler biographer, Heinz A. Heinz²⁴, who had published in 1934 an English language Hitler biography, *Germany's Hitler*.²⁵

What also would have enraged Goebbels and/or Hitler is that Rabitsch presented a list of famous artists originating from Linz, which included at least one artist of Jewish descend, the singer and actress Fritzi Massary.²⁶

Probably it was a mix of these factors that caused the ban.

Rabitsch' influence

Jetzinger signaled that August Kubizek must have used Rabitsch' book as source for some of his concoctions.²⁷ As Kubizek in his turn has been used by many later writers as source, fairy tales launched by Hugo Rabitsch in 1938 remain an ever recurring problem.

22 Boyhood of Hitler. To be a Boer leader his favourite game. *Mount Barker and Denmark Record*. Albany, (West-Australia), 10-02-1938.

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/240434605>

23 Jetzinger, p. 97.

24 Rabitsch, 34, 36

25 Heinz. A. Heinz. *Germany's Hitler*. Hurst & Blackett Ltd, London, 1934.

26 See: Beatrix Borchard. Fritzi Massary. 1882-1969. *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*. 27 February 2009. Jewish Women's Archive. (Viewed on June 7, 2019) <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/massary-fritzi>

27 Jetzinger, p. 141, 159,